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Dear Parents and Students of Year 7 – 10

The government's recent announcement extending the Country's Lockdown comes as no surprise given the high death rates in our Hospitals and Care Homes. They have set out five criteria that will need to be met before any easing of the restrictions that are being placed on us all. It is therefore highly likely that schools will remain closed for some time and possibly until September.

The work the School is setting for your children is crucial to their future success. This work will be the foundation of their future education. Those students who engage and try their best are likely to be much better placed to make faster progress once we return. Heston is rightly proud of its achievements of consistently being in the top 10% of schools in the country for the value added to their students GCSE achievements. We would encourage every parent/carer to ensure their children adopt positive learning behaviours and habits during these unprecedented times and engage as fully as possible with the set work.

In the second week after the Easter holidays we will be encouraging staff to set work for the week rather than individual lessons. This will support students planning their time and managing work effectively as well as ensuring they avoid feeling overwhelmed. Additionally, we would like all students to follow some simple techniques to help reduce the stress around completing home learning. Neuroscience supports the following:

1. **Take regular breaks** – 10 minutes every hour is ideal. Your brain is in its most energetic state in the mornings, so schedule challenging activities at the start of the day, or right after a break.
2. **Reduce stress** – Make physical exercise, eating healthily and getting enough sleep a priority.
3. **Stop multitasking** - constantly shifting your attention between different subjects or checking your phone makes it is harder to focus Do one task for 30 minutes, followed by a break of five or ten minutes.
4. **Break tasks into small steps** – When school work seem overwhelming, it makes us more likely to delay. Small steps help the brain to work better
5. **Reward yourself for achieving tasks** - completing tasks creates a sense of achievement, pleasure and motivation. When you are enjoying your work, your brain is more efficient.

Schools all over the country recognise just how challenging it is for both parents and students to maintain their focus on school work when there is no end in sight to the current crisis. When it eventually ends, students' education will undoubtedly have been negatively impacted. We have all found it difficult and perhaps even overwhelming at times. However, we want every family to try and step up to this challenge with commitment and resilience so it mitigates these missing months of formal education. I believe those students who do a significant amount of work at home will have a measureable advantage over their peers who do not.

Student's teachers will be available between 9 -11am via email each week day of the new term to answer students' enquiries, tutors will be contacting their tutees on a monthly basis and Learning Coordinators will be telephoning families to check on their welfare. All of us are aware that these are challenging times. It is important that when students are well they should try to follow something close to a normal school day. The challenges of sharing work spaces and IT access will make this difficult for many families but the goal should be for all students to strive to achieve their best. If they fall behind, we would like all parents to support the School by adopting the techniques described above. It is not expected that every child will be able to complete every piece of work without the excellent levels of support they have within our school setting – we all need to be realistic in these exceptional circumstances. We do however, want all our families to engage with the spirit of the work set. We hope for nothing more than every child should try their best. Please use the first few days after the Easter break to ensure your child understands this spirit, their responsibilities for learning and the School's expectations.

I am sure I speak for many staff in congratulating the majority of our students who are rising to these challenges with good routines, an excellent work ethic and consistently doing their best in the face of the country's struggle with the coronavirus. We look forward to seeing you all on the other side of this crisis.

Yours faithfully
M O'Hagan

In these very unusual and difficult times it is partially important that you look after your mental health, it may feel very overwhelming and challenging, but please remember you are not on your own.

Remember you can email your tutor or another member of staff that you feel comfortable talking with.

Below are also a number of agencies you can contact for support.

Young Hounslow - <https://fsd.hounslow.gov.uk/kb5/hounslow/fsd/newyouth.page>

Hounslow's new youth website providing help and support for young people. Use this to find helpful services in your locality.

YoungMinds Crisis Messenger - text YM to 85258

The Crisis Messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are experiencing a mental health crisis and need support, you can text YM to 85258. (Texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus)

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

Childline – 0800 11111 / www.childline.org.uk (online 1-2-1 counsellor chat)

Support for children and young people in the UK, including a free 24-hour helpline.

Childline has launched Calm Zone - an online hub of calming techniques and resources for young people to help them feel better when they feel anxious, scared or sad.

Website: www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone

PAPYRUS - HOPE Line UK 0800 068 4141

Confidential help and advice to young people and anyone worried about a young person

Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

ChatHealth (Advice for Teens in Hounslow) - Text: 07507 333 176

This service is provided by the Hounslow school nursing service for all young people aged 11-19. You will get a reply within 24 hours from an NHS School Nurse between 9:00am and 4:30pm, Monday to Friday (except bank holidays).

The Mix - 0808 8080 4994 / www.themix.org.uk

Online guide to life for 16-25 year-olds in the UK. Emotional support is available 24 hours a day. On the website, you can chat about anything you like on their moderated discussion boards and live chat room.

FRANK - 0300 123 6600 / www.talktofrank.com

Confidential advice and information about drugs, their effects and the law.

Kooth - www.kooth.com

Counsellors available until 10pm every day. Free, safe and anonymous online counselling for young people.

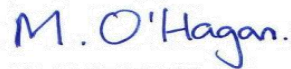
Samaritans: 116 123

Childline: 0800 1111

NSPCC: 0808 800 5000

National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 2000 247

Yours faithfully



Mr M O'Hagan
Deputy Headteacher